

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 OES-06 /065 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9953
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 1672

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINR YO
SUBJ: TITO'S HEALTH

1. SUMMARY: SOVIET DIPLOMATS HERE FIND THAT TITO
IS PHYSICALLY DECLINING AND RELYING MORE AND MORE ON HIS SUB-
ORDINATES. OTHER SOURCES BELIEVE HIS EXTENDED STAY ON THE
MONTENEGRIN COAST IS LARGELY DUE TO THE FAVORABLE CLIMATE THERE
AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR AND TO HIS NEED FOR REST BEFORE
A HEAVY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS IN MAY. HE HAS BEEN ACTIVE
WHILE ON THE COAST. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFFS HAVE DISCUSSED TITO'S HEALTH WITH SEVERAL
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EASTERN EUROPEAN AND YUGOSLAV SOURCES IN THE PAST
SEVERAL DAYS. TWO SOVIETS SAID THAT TITO IS CLEARLY
SLOWING DOWN AND RELYING TO AN INCREASING EXTENT ON
SUBORDINATES. THEY SAID THIS TREND WAS APPARENT
DURING THE TITO-BREZHNEV TALKS LAST FALL. NEITHER
KNEW OF ANY SPECIFIC AILMENT AFFECTING TITO AT THE
PRESENT TIME.

3. A POLISH DIPLOMAT WHO HAD OBSERVED TITO ON A VISIT TO WARSAW (PRESUMABLY IN 1975) SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN THEN INFORMED THAT TITO HAD "UPS AND DOWNS" AND THAT THIS IMPRESSION WAS CONFIRMED DURING THE VISIT. TITO WOULD TIRE BUT THEN COME BACK WITH RESTORED VIGOR AFTER A PERIOD OF REST.

4. A HUNGARIAN SAID THAT TITO IS CLEARLY DELEGATING MORE AND MORE WORK TO OTHERS. HE BELIEVES THAT A GREAT EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO PRESERVE TITO FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE AND THAT TITO IS NOW RESTING BECAUSE HE FACES A HEAVY SCHEDULE OF APPEARANCES IN MAY IN CONNECTION WITH HIS 85TH BIRTHDAY AND THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS 40TH YEAR AT THE HEAD OF THE PARTY.

5. A MONTENEGRIN JOURNALIST WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM MONTENEGRO SAID THAT TITO HAS BEEN STAYING IN IGALO BECAUSE IT HAS AN AGREEABLE CLIMATE AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR, FAR BETTER THAN TITO'S BRIONI RETREAT WHERE THE WEATHER CAN BE COOL AND DAMP DURING THIS PERIOD. HE SAID THAT HE HAD SEEN TITO UP AND AROUND.

6. TITO HAS BEEN REPORTED AND PICTURED IN THE MEDIA MAKING A NUMBER OF VISITS IN THE IGALO AREA DURING THIS EXTENDED STAY WHICH BEGAN JAN 26. TELEVISIONIZAR 18 SHOWED HIM MEETING WITH A DELEGATION FROM THE GREEK COMMUNIST PARTY AND MOVING NORMALLY.
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7. COMMENT: TITO MAY WELL BE IN BETTER SHAPE THAN HIS SUBORDINATES. FOREIGN SECRETARY MILOS MINIC HAS DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS FOR UNKNOWN REASONS. MINIC'S ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA DRAGAN BERNARDIC HAS BEEN ILL WITH A HEART PROBLEM BUT IS EXPECTED BACK TO WORK ON MAR 21.

8. ACCORDING TO A BRITISH DIPLOMAT, A SOVIET HAS BEEN TELLING HIM FOR SOME TIME THAT TITO HAS BEEN RELYING MORE AND MORE ON SUBORDINATES. THE SOVIET DID NOT SAY WHETHER HIS GOVT VIEWS THIS POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY, BUT BRITISH SOURCE SPECULATES THAT SOVIETS WOULD PREFER TO DEAL WITH TITO AND WE AGREE. YORK

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